Gulf of 'Oman established by the Middle East Anti-Locust Unit in 1943. Besides Trucial sheikhs and their immediate subjects, there are Bedouins, who, however, do not engage in any activity on the seas and are thus outside the provisions of the treaties. In general, the Bedouins recognize the authority of one or another of the Trucial sheikhs, but changes of allegiance are numerous. Bedouins may decide to make wars of their own, or to change sides during wars between Trucial sheikhs, which makes the political position even more complex. In recent years Bedouins have frequently attacked the motor convoys of British nationals traveling in the definite territory of peaceful sheikhs,[10] but under the provisions of the treaties there seems to be no legal remedy to stop this armed aggression, except through successful local wars by the sheikhs.

As a result of the nature of the treaties, the culture of the area, containing both Arab and Iranian elements, has been preserved practically free of any foreign admixture. Dr. A. R. Lindt,[11] a Swiss observer writing in 1939, was particularly impressed by this achievement. Slowly, however, twentieth-century influences have begun to appear. In the early 1930's Great Britain, in the course of a quarrel over oil concessions in Iran, relocated its air routes to India over Trucial 'Oman instead of Iran. Rights to land seaplanes at Dibai and landplanes at Sharjah were acquired, and maintenance crews and other personnel were permanently stationed there. To ensure safety during local wars, overnight quarters for passengers, with permanent armed guards, were established in a fortified compound near Sharjah. Landing fees, levied according to the number of passengers, were payable to the sheikhs in whose territory landings took place. These landing fees constituted a large part of the revenues of the sheikh of Sharjah, whose only other income is derived from a tax on pearling, which is hard to collect.[12] During the war, rights to make emergency landings on the island of Yas were also acquired by the British government. Today, larger planes can fly directly from Bahrein to Karachi, and little use is made of the landing rights on the Trucial Coast, so that the sheikhs' revenues must have decreased substantially. The introduction of the motorcar has also had a marked effect on the local economy. Traffic from inland oases and the Gulf of 'Oman to the cities on the shores of the Persian Gulf is important, though no statistical data are available.

The presence of oil had been suspected since the beginning of the century, but the inaccessibility of the region together with its uncertain political status

[10] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[11] Politics in the Persian Gulf, *Journ. Royal Central Asian Soc.*, Vol. 26, 1939, pp. 619-633.
[12] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 140.

in which dried fish, raw meat, ghee butter and other foodstuffs are openly displayed. These goods are always black with flies and as one drives through the narrow streets of the shopping centre a black, buzzing cloud obscures the windscreen. In summer it is much worse. The Arabs are curiously indifferent to this plague of dirt, bad odour and insects, and will sit for hours outside the shops, idly gossiping, while flies settle on their beards and faces, fall into their Turkish tea, or get mixed up with their rice. It is almost impossible not to swallow flies when one is talking, and the only remedy when in these districts is to keep one's mouth tightly shut. I have seen Arab babies lying in the open air, their eyes swollen and festered from some disease and covered with flies. Trachoma and cataract are common troubles among the Arabs, and it is surprising that epidemics of typhoid and dysentery are not frequent.

The blame for this state of affairs cannot be laid on the Arab peasantry, who are illiterate, badly paid and poorly nourished. They have been brought up for centuries in primitive surroundings and have come to regard their way of life as natural and even congenial. It is curious that where the poorer class of Arab has come into close contact with the American or Englishman he has imitated, in a bizarre and comic fashion, the Western style of dress, but he has stopped short at the more important aspects of our civilization. Perhaps, in his present state of culture, the Arab has an ingrained scorn of sanitation and health. By disposition, and owing to the intense heat of the summer months, he is a lazy individual, judged by our standards, working only when he must or when the fancy takes him. But there are deeper reasons for the Arab's tolerance of dirt and disease. To say that his attitude is inborn, as some visitors to the Middle East are prone to do, is begging the question.

The Arab has some admirable virtues, not the least of which is his strong sense of hospitality and charity. The poor man seldom goes away empty-handed, and the visitor is always sure of a meal, a resting-place for the night, and coffee. If not always strictly truthful, the Arab is unfailingly polite and his courteous manners would often put a European to shame. He has outstanding courage, particularly in battle, and despises meanness and immorality. He is frugal, kindly unless his fierce pride and spirit of independence are upset, and intensely religious. Indeed, what impressed me most about the Arabs of all classes was their extreme devotion to the faith of the Prophet, and their realistic interpretation of the Koran, which means more to them in their daily lives than the Bible means